

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough consideration provided in the present application. Claims 1-10, 12, 14-38 are currently pending in the instant application. Claims 1 and 30 have been amended. Claims 2, 4, 16, 17 and 19-22 have been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner. Claims 1 and 30 are independent. Reconsideration of the present application is earnestly solicited.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 3, 5-7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suemoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,151,067) in view of Iwashita et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,148,072) and Vockenhuber (U.S. Patent No. 4,148,072). Claim 8 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suemoto et al. in view of Iwashita and Vockenhuber, and further in view of Kaneko (U.S. Patent No. 4,920,371). Claims 24-26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suemoto in view of Iwashita and Vockenhuber, and further in view of Ishikawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,549,650). Claims 27-29 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vockenhuber in view of Suemoto in view of Iwashita and Vockenhuber, and further in view of Fellegara et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,441,854). Claims 30-31 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vockenhuber in view of Suemoto et al. Claims 32-35 have been

rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vockenhuber in view of Suemoto, and further in view of Ishikawa et al. Claims 36-38 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vockenhuber in view of Suemoto, and further in view of Fellegara et al. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

In light of the foregoing amendments to the claims, Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections have been obviated and/or rendered moot. Without conceding the propriety of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to clarify the implicit features of the originally claimed invention, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 30 to clarify the subject matter of the present invention for the benefit of the Examiner. Applicants submit that the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest each and every limitation of the unique combination of limitations of claims 1 and 30. Accordingly, these rejections should be withdrawn.

With respect to claim 1, Applicants submit that the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the unique combination of limitations of the claimed invention, including the features of: "a lens controller for driving the zoom lenses of the first and second image-capturing optical systems to equalize zooming magnifications of the first and second image-capturing optical systems, *wherein said first and second image-capturing units cooperatively provide at least one of a panoramic imaging mode and a three-dimensional imaging mode when operatively connected in the multi-lens camera mode.*" (Emphasis added) Accordingly, these rejections should be withdrawn.

With respect to claim 30, Applicants submit that the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the unique combination of limitations of the claimed invention, including the features of: "a first connecting part that mechanically and directly connects a second connecting part of the second image-capturing unit so as to form a single unit, *wherein said first and second image-capturing units cooperatively provide at least one of a panoramic imaging mode and a three-dimensional imaging mode when operatively connected in the multi-lens camera mode.*" (*Emphasis added*) Accordingly, these rejections should be withdrawn.

Applicants submit that the prior art of record does not teach or suggest a plurality of camera units that can be efficiently connected, e.g., quickly and in a relatively compact way, and also provide a variety of operating modes. In the claimed invention, the combination of the first and the second image-capturing units cooperatively provides the ability to obtain at least one of panoramic images and three-dimensional images when operatively connected in the multi-lens camera mode.

With respect to the Vockenhuber and Suemoto references relied upon by the Examiner, these references appear to relate to the joint operation of two image-capturing or video capturing units. However, these references do not identify, involve or address any of the specific problems relating to the operation of a plurality of image-capturing units in a multi-lens mode that provides at least one of three-dimensional images or panoramic images. Therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn. Further, Applicants submit that the alleged teachings of Ishikawa relating to parallax barrier display layers and left- and right-

eye imaging patterns are not relevant to any art recognized problems associated with the Vockenhuber and Suemoto devices. Accordingly, Applicants submit that one of ordinary skill in the art would not have modified the Vockenhuber or Suemoto devices with the alleged teachings of the Ishikawa reference as advanced by the Examiner. Accordingly, these rejections should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

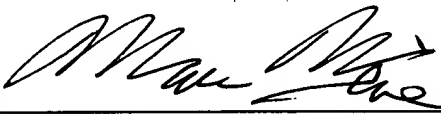
All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Matthew T. Shanley, Registration No. 43,368 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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